



The Dickens Family to Brazil

December 2007

Dear Praying Saints,

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Once again we are in the midst of the holiday season. Living in the southern hemisphere, I always have a hard time adjusting to celebrating Christmas in the 90's and I am not speaking about the decade. The people here use lights, and trees and decorations, but there is also a great deal of emphasis on the birth of Christ due to the strong religious nature of the people. However, the focus is not on the fact that He was born to die for our sins, but more on His earthly mother and the worship of her person. We are trying to teach the people that as we celebrate the birth of our wonderful Savior, we are celebrating the fact that through the occurrences that surrounded His birth we have proof that He is the Messiah, Emmanuel, God in the flesh, born as a human to be the sacrifice for our sins. This fact recently came to light as I visited the home of a young man who I won to Christ and desires to be discipled. When I arrived at his home he greeted me with, "Hello, Pastor, I have a really good book that I want you to look at and let me know what you think." Immediately when I saw the title, *You Can Live Forever in the Paradise on Earth*, I knew that this was not a book that he needed to have in his possession. He had had it for some time and had apparently read it or at least skimmed it some. The illustrations were beautiful and the book well made, but as soon as I showed him the chapter that constantly called Jesus merely the Son of God and equal with Adam, he was able to say to me, "Pastor, then this book is disposable?" I assured him that it was, but instead of the possibility of it falling into the hands of someone else, he gave it to me. I have no desire to live for eternity on this earth. I am awaiting eternity in heaven.

Always at this time I like to thank each and every one of our friends and supporting churches and the individuals that make up those churches for their love, prayer, and sacrifice over the past year. This year I was reminded about not just how much you all mean to us and our ministry, but the people we are winning to Christ and discipling are also aware of your sacrifices. Every Wednesday, we hold our prayer meeting and Bible study. Usually I ask one of the men who we won to Christ early on in the ministry in Belo Jardim to pray for the requests and then I close in prayer. The past two or three weeks he never ends his prayer before giving thanks to God for all of the churches that support us and allow us to reach Brazilians like him for Christ. This is especially significant since recently his "wife" has been attending the services more frequently and they seem to be having an improved relationship in the home. She trusted Christ about a year ago, but has not shown consistent spiritual growth. Perhaps, you do not realize that every sacrificial gift that you give allows us to reach Brazilians, which by the way, if millions, billions, or trillions seem like large numbers, just imagine how large a Brazilian is. Christ gave His life so that we might share His gospel with others and you have a part of that this and every day not just during this holiday time.



Our holiday season is filled with plans for a cantata, and a children's nativity scene as I narrate the Christmas story, as well as the regular visits, Bible studies, discipleship and regular services. The seminary semester is quickly drawing to a close and that will mean some extra time, but as a family we are all going to have to pull together. Cynthia fell Sunday night and dislocated her knee. She is fine other than pain, and a partial cast, but the doctor has ordered very limited activity so Dad now becomes Mom too for a



time. The boys are pitching in with the dishes and their normal chores of bed making and keeping their rooms tidied, but the girls still can't help all that much.

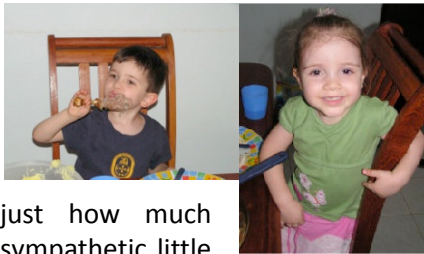


fall from the rich man's table.

Last week, we celebrated our Thanksgiving. The Brazilians do not celebrate Thanksgiving as the pilgrims did not come to Brazil to start a new colony, but we as a family celebrate. The kids loved it and even the dogs got to partake of the leftovers. Talk about the crumbs that



I am looking forward to the New Year with anticipation. We are seeing increased attendance at the services and we are praying to able to baptize some folks this coming year. Cynthia will be teaching both Morgan and Aydan, and they both seem excited about it. Aydan went so far as to claim that he



just how much sympathetic little

grow a little closer together. Abigail is an independent little spirit, and the Brazilians are fond of saying that her strong will and attitude are "very Brazilian". Cynthia will be down for a while, but has already found a way to be involved helping with anything computer related, thank the Lord for laptops. This coming year also finds us planning our first furlough. We will be coming back to the states in late August. Our home church already has plans for us during that first week, but I will be contacting pastors to schedule meetings for 2008 & 2009. If you are interested in having us report at a specific time, please contact me. My email is prjoel@earthlink.net and we do have a stateside number (804)451-1327.



We are so glad to have you all praying for us and supporting our ministry. We received the greatest gift in history when Christ came to the earth. This Christmas we are just giving thanks for the privilege to represent Christ and each of you here in the harvest field of Northeast Brazil. God bless! Merry Christmas from all of the Dickens.

...Because He gave Himself for our sins,

Joel Dickens

for Cynthia, Morgan, Aydan, Daniella, and Abigail

P.S. Thank you for your continued prayer support.